

OTTAWA HOME computing

The Newsletter of the
Ottawa Home
Computing Club

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1990

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Serving the Amiga Apple, Commodore, Macintosh and MS-Dos Computers



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OTTAWA HOME COMPUTING CLUB

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Ottawa Home Computing Club is open to all who have a genuine interest in home computing. The membership fee is \$25 per year and entitles members to:

- attend monthly meetings
- buy Club disks
- receive the Club newsletter
- participate in the election of the Club executive
- participate in any other Club-sponsored activities.
- full sign-on privileges on the Club BBS

MEETINGS

Club meetings are held monthly at the Confederation High School (Woodroffe near Nepean Sportsplex), usually the third Monday of the month. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

January 15, February 19, March 19,

April 17*, May 22*, June 11*

An * beside a date indicates that the meeting is not on the third Monday of that month.

Meeting format is standard (see "Club Notes" for specific details on the upcoming meeting) and the format is:

- 7:00 Membership registration, Disk of the Month sales, socialization
- 7:30 Business Meeting
- 7:45 Main Presentation
- 8:30 Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, Librarian and Machine-specific group meetings

Special Interest Groups are meeting places for people with similar interests. Tell people what you're doing, or would like to be doing; ask people what they're doing, or discuss a problem you're having. What members get out of these meetings is proportional to what they put in.

Also in this time period the following librarians will be available for your questions, suggestions, disk orders. You may even catch a demo of the latest software:

- Apple/Macintosh-Auditorium—Scotty
- C64/Disk of Month-Room 117—Carl
- Amiga - Room 128—Don/Peter
- C128 & CP/M - Room 119—Bob
- MS-DOS - Room 115—Dan
- C64 Beginners - Room 118—Pierre

CLUB EXECUTIVE

Elected Positions:

- President: Pierre Castricum, 830-6984
- Vice-President: Daniel R. Pigeon, 446-6104
- Secretary: Gerry Bouchard, 731-0920
- Treasurer: Mike Bryan, 226-5588
- Program Co-ordinator: Wayne D. Schaler, 728-7811

Librarians:

- Amiga: Don White, 829-2082
- Apple: Vojta Fryzek, 722-9778
- Commodore 64: *vacant*
- Commodore 128/CP/M: Bob Mason, 837-3197
- MS-DOS: 3 1/2 Ray Monette, 722-1204
5 1/4 Hans Hagenraats, 1-257-4158
- TPUG: Marv Bero, 727-9674

Other Positions:

- Membership: Lucien St. Denis, 224-2972
- Bulletin Board SYSOP: Pierre Castricum, 830-6984
- Retail Disk Distribution: Gerry Bouchard, 731-0920
- Newsletter Editor: Ray Monette, 722-1204
- Director at Large: Scotty Adams, 592-3492

OHCC Bulletin Board 226-8952

Address all correspondence to:

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OTTAWA HOME COMPUTING

Ottawa Home Computing is the newsletter of the Ottawa Home Computing Club, and is mailed free-of-charge to all members in good standing. Ottawa Home Computing is published 10 times a year, monthly except for the months of June and August.

Submissions to Ottawa Home Computing are most welcomed. If hand written, please make sure your submission is legible. Articles submitted in a ready-to-print format, or on disk, are also appreciated. Please contact the Editor for more information if you choose either of these latter two methods. Graphic submissions are also needed. For best reproduction, submissions should be designed to the width of one or two columns (approximately 3 1/2" or 7"). If produced on a printer, please use a fairly new ribbon; if drawn please use a black pen.

Classified advertisements of personal items (up to 25 words) are free to members. For information on commercial display and classified advertising, please contact the Advertising Manager.

Newsletter staff:

- Editor: Ray Monette, 722-1204
- Amiga Editor: Marv Bero, 727-9674
- Apple/Mac Editor: *vacant*
- MS-DOS Editor: Brian Mudge, 739-1212
- Advertising Manager: Scotty Adams, 592-3492

Address all correspondence to:

Raymond Monette
1260 Emperor Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 8C5

C64 DISK OF THE MONTH RETAIL SALES

The C64 Disk of the Month is carried in the following stores. It sells for about \$4.50 and is available two days after each meeting.

Ali Computers	
1158 Ogilvie Rd.	744-0220
Compucentre	
Carlingwood Plaza	729-0448
Lynx Technical	
2150 St. Joseph (Orleans)	830-8396
Mr. Diskette	
119 O'Connor	232-5203
1600 Merivale Rd.	727-0179
1456 Cyrville	749-3100
100-14 Bexley	596-0691
NCE Service	
C8-2285 St. Laurent Blvd	526-3701

CLUB NOTES

by Ray Monette

JAN. 8, 1990 EXEC MEETING

Pierre talked about the upcoming club demo at Carlingwood Shopping Center, on the 19/20 January.

Dan said that for the month of February, he knows of a man that does music on a PC.

Lucien told us that the membership is now standing at 226 members.

Carl position has still not been filled.

EDITORIAL

by Ray Monette- Newsletter Editor

Well as you probably heard/read, the club demo at Carlingwood Shopping Centre, is now history, it came and went.

Gerry did a great job in organizing this demo, he kept busy handing out buttons to nearly every kid that went by our display. This year we had two new members come and give us a hand on Friday, Andre Parent and his friend. Nice to see that they got involved — thanks guys.

Saturday everybody at the booth geared up their systems to get everyone that went by to stop and say AH! LOOK AT THAT, OH! LOOK AT THIS ONE. People stopped and asked lots of questions.

I gave Lucien a hand, handing out newsletter and applications to passing customers. I also looked after the sale of MS-DOS disks at the club booth.

Dan got the point across with the kids who all wanted to stop by his display and play the game Silpheed and for the adults the murder/mystery The Colonel's B-Quest, both of which were hooked up to Dan's music board and stereo system.

Peter showed the Genealogy program he created with Superbase Pro to trace his family history.

Carl demoed GEOS and Space Travel, while Pierre gave us GEOS, Paperclip III (128), and Superbase for the C64.

Don showed us Deluxe Paint III where he was creating an animation about the OHCC, and he also used a microphone with a sound editing program to digitally record people's voices and then play them back on his Amiga 2000.

From this display we picked up a few new members and a possibility of more to come. Looks like everyone that participated in the demo enjoyed themselves. Thanks again Gerry.

News Update:

As you probably noticed in the listing of Newsletter staff, there has been a change: Marv Bero is now the new Amiga Editor and Brian Mudge moves over to the MS-DOS Editor position.

This change is a result of the TPUG Librarian position not being too active due to the unavailability of TPUG disks on a regular basis, and Marv wanting to give Ray a hand with the newsletter.

He will now do so from the Amiga side of the newsletter, with various articles, review and comments. The only position left is the Apple/Mac Editor. So if anyone is interested please contact any member of the Executive or the Newsletter Editor.

Also in the newsletter, on page 2, at the top of the middle column you will see a *name* beside the SIG group and where the demo is being held. *That name is the name of the SIG leader.*

So if you have any questions about that SIG group, you can contact that person.

President's Message

by Pierre Castricum

Greetings!

I would like to welcome all members to the February 1990 meeting of the OHCC.

On January 19th and 20th, members of the executive committee together with other club volunteers were present at a demonstration held at Carlingwood Shopping Centre. A large number of visitors came to our booth, asked a ton of questions, and in some cases, purchased a membership.

The whole event was organized by Gerry Bouchard, the club's secretary. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Gerry and all those who participated in the event. Hats off to all of you!

A number of members have stated an interest in having another garage/rummage sale in the near future. It should be noted that this type of event requires a great deal of organization.

For this reason, the executive committee will be studying the feasibility of staging a sale at its next meeting.

Members will be advised in due course.

Have a great month and I'll see you at the meeting.

Electricity: Is Your Home Office Safe?

by Ray Monette

If a power surge has zapped your word-processor file or flubbed up your fax, you've learned the hard way about the importance of good circuitry. But poorly managed power can also be a hazard to personal safety. Here are outlined tips for ensuring electricity safety in your office.

- Don't run office equipment on a circuit that also serves motors or heavy, non-continuous loads, such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, exhaust fans, furnaces, heaters, hair dryers, sterilizers, power tools, or vacuum cleaners. The extra load could cause interference on the line or blow a fuse, perhaps at a critical moment (like when you're saving a file to your hard disk).
- To find out which outlets are connected to which circuits, plug in a loud radio at each location you intend to use office equipment. One by one, disconnect your fuses or switch off your circuit breakers until you find the one corresponding to that circuit (the radio will shut off). Next, go through the rest of the house to find out what else has gone dead. Don't forget to check the doobbell, the furnace, the attic, the outside light, and the garage. All the appliances that have been disable are connected to the same circuit.
- Heed the manufacturer's instructions regarding electrical supply. This way, you keep warranties in force. Some equipment (some air conditioners, for example) may require a dedicated circuit with nothing on it but the equipment in question, protected by a 15- or 30-ampere fuse or circuit breaker.
- Buy only listed (inspected and certified) accessories. Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) and Canadian Standard Association (CSA) are the most common listing laboratories. Non-listed equipment may not meet safety standards.
- Buy a self-explanatory tester or hire an electrician to make sure your outlets are probably grounded. Ungrounded outlets are a safety hazard and present a danger to data, disks, chips. Don't judge a book by its cover: Even modern-looking three-prong outlets are not necessarily grounded.
- Spend a few dollars to have outlets replaced. If a receptacle doesn't grab the plug firmly, the flow of electricity can become irregular as it struggles to pass from the outlet into your power cord.
- Don't use too many extension cords—they increase the risk of fire and shock. Furthermore, a disturbed extension cord can disrupt a circuit—destroying data or damaging disks and even equipment. Running cords from room to room, under carpets, or pinched under or behind furniture is especially risky.

- Give thought to your total office load. Read the equipment nameplates. The rules are simple. First, no piece of equipment designed to share a circuit should draw more than 50% of the circuit's capacity. Second, all equipment that will be used together should not add up to more than 80% of circuit capacity.

OHCC BBS

by Pierre Castricum

This is my first of many reports regarding activity on the BBS.

Membership together with activity on the board has increased in number over the last few months. Of course, everything hasn't been smooth sailing. We have had to cope with moving the BBS to a new location, frequent crashes, uploading/downloading problems, validation of new members, replying to members' questions, just to name a few.

Did I mention it was very time consuming? I will remember the night I told Don White of my intention to take over as SYSOP. "It shouldn't take too much of your time", I recall him saying. What I did not realize at the time that I would spend an average of 1 1/2 hours on the board every night. I might add it is quite enjoyable, especially when things are working okay.

It became evident around Christmas time that some areas contained a large number of programs there by limiting the uploading of new material due to space constraints. In order to rectify this problem, I have begun deleting programs from all areas so that space can be made available to upload new material.

I have recently completed deletion of over 50 programs from Area 2 (C64/128). All programs which have been deleted have also been downloaded onto disks; these disks have been given to Carl Bigras (C64 Librarian) who will put them on disks of the month.

The next area to be cleaned is Area 8 (GEOS). Here too, programs will be downloaded onto disks and given to Carl. A listing of those files which have been deleted will be made available to everyone.

Also, I will be uploading the same list (as a text file) in each area where files have been deleted. In conclusion, if you should have any questions regarding the BBS, I will be more than happy to answer them for you.

See you on the board and happy computing!

Room at the Top, Bottom and the Middle

by Jan Frakor

Fortune keeps dropping printers into my life. That is not a complaint, just a statement of my credentials so that you can judge whether you should listen to one more opinionated article with respect or derision. By coincidence, the printers I now own or work with span the range in price and quality from top to bottom. What it has taught me is — surprise — there's room for all of them and you are not likely to be disappointed by any. That's provided you know what to expect.

At the nose-in-the-air end of this lineup is the Hewlett-Packard Deskjet, which in my opinion is the best buy in high-quality printing today. You should be able to find one at about \$1,300. In the middle is the Raven PR2417, which is really a Panasonic PR1124 in drag. It goes for around \$600.

And down there with the sturdy peasants, humbly grinding away the dirty jobs every day, is the Star NX-1000. I paid considerably less than \$300 for mine, and that was three years ago at the World of Commodore show in Toronto. They were brand new then, and Mary Bero, Pierre Castricum, and I all snapped up what was an obvious bargain. I've never regretted it.

We've come a long way since the days when the only way to go in printing was either a clunky daisy wheel or the good old Epson MX-80, costing \$700 to deliver only dot-matrix quality at 80 characters per second. I still own my old MX, considerably souped up with near-letter quality ROMS and a higher speed clock—but let's face it—the \$300 Star beats anything today that Epson makes in anything under \$800 or so.

Let's start from the bottom. The Star is cheap, and it feels cheap. Little bits of plastic tabs keep breaking and falling off. Within a few months, I couldn't put on the single-sheet holder, and the back cover that hides the tractor mechanism is hanging on by one support. The paper handling is about average. It is a nuisance to keep flipping off the back cover and the front dust cover, and the paper seldom threads itself under both the paper bail and the dust cover properly.

So why do I love it? Speed, versatility and quality of print. It goes at 120 characters per second in its nice, large, dot-matrix draft mode. That's a decent speed for the kind of draft work I do. At 24 characters per second, it gives you an excellent near-letter-quality mode. In fact, for a nine-pin printer, the quality is remarkable. No, it's not daisy-wheel quality, but it's awfully good. Yes, it's slow at NLQ settings, but I have seen worse quality from much more expensive machines. As for versatility, it can park your tractor-feed paper while you print a single sheet, such as letterhead, and then quite smoothly roll your tractor-feed paper right back into position so you can continue. I use that feature a lot. Even many expensive printers don't have it.

It will do not just double-width, but double-height, double-width and double-height combined, and quadruple size. Not even the latest Epson FX series do that. Not only that, but it has three NLQ type faces — the Courier face looks like a typewriter; the Sans Serif face looks like the blocky print you see in technical manuals, and the Orator face is a large capitals/small capitals face that is

severely straight and, as you would guess from the name, is easy to see and to read if you are making speeches.

It can emulate the Epson FX-80, or the IBM Proprietary character sets. And best of all — the Star is small. I have always appreciated things that don't crowd my desk. This printer has the smallest footprint that I know of in a machine this cheap. It is no bigger than my old MX-80. One of the problems with printers is that they get bigger and bigger as they add features, and they should not.

The plastic may be cheap, but the mechanism is not. Stars have a reputation for durability and after three years with no problems at all, and not even a greasing, I believe mine lives up to that reputation. In its price range the only things that come close are some of the Panasonic 1090/91 series, and they don't have that combination of fonts, print quality, small size and versatility.

Those who want colour printing can opt for the NX1000 Rainbow, at a couple of hundred dollars more. It's based on the same basic mechanism. Again, I know of no other colour printer that cheap, and that versatile. The Stars are loveable, small, occasionally cantankerous, and hard working. Like Santa's elves.

24-Pin Dot Matrix

What do you get when you double the money and go for a Raven PR2417? Lots more versatility, even more print quality, and somewhat more speed. It's a 24-pin printer, which means the best possible quality you can get in dot-matrix printers today.

The NLQ mode is, in my opinion, so close to daisy-wheel quality that the difference is negligible. I'd say an office equipped with these doesn't need to bother with any other. The paper handling is excellent. Simple, quick to get at, and astoundingly versatile. You can load paper in from the back, the front, or from underneath. The preferred path is from underneath, and that indicates that Panasonic doesn't consider this a home printer. Most of us don't have desks with dedicated slots to feed paper from boxes underneath.

Like the Star, it can feed and print single sheets while parking your tractor feed paper, but there's more — it can flip quickly from being a push-tractor to a pull-tractor. The push position is preferred for ordinary paper, because you don't waste any sheets when you cut off the one that's just printed. The pull position is preferred for things like mailing labels, which need to be held steady.

In draft mode, it goes at 160 characters per second. Ignore the claims Roland make about 192 characters per second — that applies to the Elite type face and not the Pica face that we all use. The really nice part is the 53 characters per second speed in NLQ mode. That's nearly twice as fast as most printers will do, and it's an incredible speed for such outstanding quality.

In its top quality graphics mode, it claims a resolution of 360 dots per inch. That's supposedly higher than a laser printer's 300 dots per inch. Don't be fooled. Dot matrix quality, no matter how many dots, will look dotty. But it will look AWFULLY good compared to what nine-pin printers can deliver.

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Like the Star, it gives you a built-in choice of type faces in NLQ mode. There's the usual Courier and Elite (Prestige). And a Sans Serif, a Bold Proportional spacing that looks like technical manual printing, and a Script face that imitates hand writing. For the life of me, I can't imagine why an office or even a home user would want that face. It isn't particularly good looking, not particularly easy to read, and anyone who thinks imitation hand-writing adds a personal touch must be deluded. But there it is.

All of these faces can be selected from software in an Epson FX-80 or IBM Proprietary mode, or — and this one will keep your little mind occupied for the next few months — from a front panel full of membrane switches. Even after reading the manual and practising for a few days, I can guarantee that you will get confused about which row of buttons to press, in which order, and how many times.

You can enter four automated configurations in to the memory of the printer by way of these switches. That means that, for example, you could set up one "printer macro" for draft mode; another for Prestige Elite, italic, bold face for, say, business letters, and maybe the Sans Serif for a memo. Then you just flip from one to the other by way of the front panel — or from software. Very versatile. Very confusing. But business people hire and train secretaries to figure that out for them.

This printer may be a little too pricey for the home user, but it would be hard to beat for speed, versatility and printing quality in a business or education setting. Panasonic (Roland, Raven) has entered the business market with a vengeance. This printer is a real competitor.

Hewlett-Packard Deskjet

And now, my heart's delight — the Hewlett-Packard Deskjet or its upgrade, the Deskjet Plus. We're into a whole new world here. This is an ink-jet printer, and it doesn't work remotely like a dot-matrix except that ink is squirted out in little dots.

Would you believe a so-called "draft" mode that, at 240 characters per second, is laser-printer quality? In fact, the draft mode and the letter quality mode are really identical in form. The LQ mode is just darker because it uses more ink. An it runs at 120 characters per second — get that — laser printer quality at dot-matrix speed. Now don't take that too literally. The fact is that the printer handles paper rather slowly so that even if the printing is fast, the number of sheets printed is only average by dot-matrix standards. It's my understanding that the new DeskJet Plus is much faster, but I can't vouch for that.

The printer uses standard Xerox-grade paper, which is an advantage because supplies are easy to find and buy, and even easier to steal from employers. The disadvantage here is that the paper bin takes only 100 sheets. It's not nearly enough if you are doing heavy printing, as you would in a office or educational environment where such printers are likely to be found.

What really looks good is GEOS on this machine. In theory, GEOS fonts on the HP are printed at 75 dots per inch, and supposedly on a dot-matrix they are printed at 80. The heck with theory. In fact, on the HP, GEOS fonts look much smoother, much darker and much more professional.

HP's manual doesn't tell you much about using this printer with C64, as they are aiming at the IBM/Macintosh market, so don't expect much help. Nevertheless, the manual is clear and complete and well-indexed, so that anyone with the normal allotment of brains can figure it out. The easiest and most direct way to use it is to buy a cartridge (all HP fonts except the resident Courier font come on cartridges) that emulates the FX-80. Then just print to it as if it were an Epson. Just make sure you have an interface that connects to an Epson-type printer, and that it or your software can send true ASCII characters. No problems.

The best way is to use the HP's native mode, or to use a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet printer driver, which uses almost exactly the same codes as the DeskJet. Alas, have you ever seen Paper Clip or SpeedScript with an HP LaserJet driver? No, neither have I. I know of no Commodore software that has, except for GEOS. Using GEOS with the LaserJet driver works even better, in my opinion, than with the Epson FX80 emulator. Remember to disconnect the FX80 cartridge if you want to use the HP native mode or the LaserJet driver. If you like, you can write your text in any word processor you like, pick it up into GeoWrite using the file conversion utilities that GEOS offers, and print that way.

The paper handling, since it just means loading single sheet bundles, is simplicity itself. I have never had a paper jam and this is the only printer I have ever owned that I would feel confident about leaving unattended while it prints.

Best of all, it is beautifully silent. Nothing but a soft swishing and the odd contented purr and click as it changes paper. Believe me, when you have work habits like mine (I love staying up until 2:00 AM) and families like mine (they love sleeping at that time) there is nothing like a DeskJet.

Expensive to buy? Yes. To operate? Yes. The ink cartridges, which are idiot-proof to load and use, cost nearly \$40 and I have run through one of them in as little as two months. Cheer up. Already the bulletin boards have reported that you can refill them with 2cc (it must never be more than 2cc) of Shaefers Skip black ink by sticking a hypodermic needle into the little green air hole on top of the cartridge. It works. Just be careful never to overfill, and never to let the cartridge run completely dry or it never prints quite properly.

The downside of this is that the ink is not waterproof. Just a little moisture on your fingers, and it smudges. Hewlett-Packard keeps promising to develop a new ink, but it has not and let's not count on it.

Now, why would anyone buy a dot-matrix printer when this beauty is available? Well, simultaneous copies for one thing. You can run three-part carbonless paper through the Star and Raven and get lots of copies quickly. Similarly, you can't do mailing labels with the HP. It's purely a high-quality printer for letterhead, for important graphics, and for beautiful desktop publishing.

I wouldn't dump my Star now that I have the DeskJet. On the other hand, I'm never going to dump the DeskJet. If I didn't have either of these, the Raven would almost fill the shoes of either.

BBS Uploading

by Bob Mason

This is a copy of the text of the file README.001 found in Area #12 of the club BBS. When in Area #12, you can read this file by typing V (for view).

February 1, 1990

These instructions will help you prepare a text file for uploading to the Newsletter file area. This file will be updated from time to time—the filename extension will change, as will the date at the top of this file.

For APPLE and MAC, MS-DOS and AMIGA machines, the instructions are straightforward. Prepare a simple text file with as little formating as possible. That's right—no bold, no tab codes, no paragraph indents, no centred titles, just plain text.

The reason for this is that codes do not transfer very well between computers, or even between different programs on the same computer. Your codes may slip by the editor and come out as hieroglyphics in the Newsletter. If you want to do something fancy, insert a paragraph at the beginning of the file with instructions. Address that paragraph to the editor, so he'll be sure to read it. If you have tabular material, put a few spacebars between each column, and just type it line for line, because Ventura tab codes will have to be inserted after the file is received.

COMMODORE users who want to upload articles for the Newsletter should follow all of the above recommendations PLUS must save the file in a sequential format AND must find a way to send the file in ASCII code. The sequential file is fairly easy, as most word processors have a facility for saving and editing sequential files. In the directory, they come up as SEQ rather than PRG files. Having the files converted to ASCII code is a bit different.

Investigate the possibility that either your Word Processor or your Telecommunication program can convert your normal type, which is in Commodore ASCII—or PETSCII—format, into standard ASCII code. My word processor, Paperclip III, has a setting for 'Sequential File Format', either Commodore or ASCII. My telecommunications program, Ultraterm, also has a 'Translate' setting under file transfer, translating from PETSCII to ASCII. Either one will work.

One may be better than the other. If the way you choose doesn't work, expect a call from the Newsletter Editor, telling you to try another method. Once you get the best method figured out, write the procedure down for future transmissions.

Thanks in advance for your contribution to the Newsletter.

HyperCard Tips and Tricks

Helpful Hints to Post Near the Computer

Stack Design Guidelines

Plan Card Layout Carefully

- Place important information near the center
- Place extra information, navigation buttons, and other commonly used buttons around the edges of the card
- Use the full card when needed—white space is more important than an attractive border

Be Consistent

- Always provide the user with buttons for going "Home," "stepping back in the stack, etc."
- Keep these navigation buttons in a consistent location on the screen

Provide Feedback

- Show users (with a map, card title, etc.) where they are in the stack
- Provide access to a map or flow chart of your stack
- Use a sound, light, or the "switch" cursor to confirm that a button has been clicked

Keep Text Simple and Brief

- Use no more than two fonts per card/stack
- Select font/styles that are easy to read:
 - Some laser fonts are hard to read on the screen
 - Italic style is hard to read
- Geneva and New York were designed for the Mac screen and are easier to read
- Limit the amount of text to be read on any card to a few lines

Use Visual Effects for a Purpose

- Dissolve, checkerboard, or vegetation blinds to change subjects
- Zoom, iris, or barn door close/open to move to less or more specific information
- Scroll or wipe to show linear movement (through a database, in a line, etc.)
- Don't overuse visual effects

C64—The Survivor

by Bruce Schowalter

The Commodore 64 is proving itself to be one of the elite group of 8 bit home computers that have survived recent advances in technology and continue to be used extensively. The only others are the Apple II series and the Atari XL series. The C64 and Apple have long been used in the schools of Canada and the U.S.A. to teach the essentials of Basic programming, as well as some programmed instruction.

The C64 has based its success on the best sound and graphics supported by a software collection of games, utilities, and home applications of any computer.

There remain two Commodore magazines that I know of, Compute's Gazette and RUN, exclusively dedicated to the C64 and C128. [Ed's note: there is also the Transactor for the more technically inclined C64 & C128 users.] Many computer clubs like our own OHCC produce Disks of the Month for the C64.

It seems that Commodore doesn't have the same kind of long term outlook that Apple has shown. Apple continues to support the II long after more advanced, but not necessarily more useful nor fun computers have come along. It would be nice if Commodore showed such vision and continued its support for the C64.

In some ways we are all a bit uneasy after our experience with the VIC20. But that computer had just too little memory at 3.5K. The C64 has plenty for home applications, utilities and entertainment software. And with the RAM expander, which is now being manufactured by third parties, even memory-hungry programs like GEOS can run smoothly. So for C64 users, the shortage is not in the area of hardware, but software. Many companies are not even bothering to translate their new software products into a C64 format.

The best source of new, inexpensive, C64 software is LOADSTAR,
P.O. Box 30008,
Shreveport, Louisiana,
71130-008, U.S.A.,
1-318-221-8718.

They continue to amaze me monthly with the quality and quantity of new articles, games, puzzles, home utilities, editorials, reviews, reader feedback and other programs that they publish on two full double-sided disks.

These professional level programs are bought from hackers all over North America. In fact a submission form is included each month, if you would like to sell some of your latest programs. There is also an active dialogue with subscribers who rate each issue and ask questions about computing that are answered by their experts.

LOADSTAR is only \$13.95 in local computer magazine stores such as Ali's. They have a 3 month trial subscription for \$24.95

US or a 12 month for \$79.95 US, delivered to your door, and they take charge cards that do the conversion to Canadian dollars. They are determined to stay in the C64 publishing business. The following article, which is especially relevant to the state of the C64, is one of many on LOADSTAR #63.

DISKOVERY: PROTESTING TOO MUCH

by Fender Tucker

In the Diskovery for LOADSTAR #61 I wrote about the demise of some C-64 paper magazines, emphasizing that LOADSTAR is not in the same boat at all, and will continue strong for years to come.

Well, judging by our mail, many people missed my emphasis and saw only the negative points I brought up.

Let me say it again: LOADSTAR is NOT affected by the shenanigans of Commodore Business Machines: AHOY!, RUN, Gazette, Suite 64, Uptime, or even Commodore Magazine.

There are so many people who have no intention of buying another computer (I'm one of them), that there will "always" be a demand for full-featured, new and upgraded programs for the C-64 — and that's what LOADSTAR is all about.

Do I protest too much? I hope not. In any case, I won't go on about it except to say that we've received quite a few letters about the Suite 64 situation. Suite 64 was a publication vaguely similar to our Australia that folded after one issue, and so far hasn't reimbursed any of its subscribers — as far as we know.

Several readers want us to spearhead a class-action lawsuit or something, but lawyers and LOADSTAR aren't compatible. What we WILL do is print letters and addresses of people and agencies relevant to the snafu. See next month's Forum.

Speaking of next month, LOADSTAR #64 is looking like a super issue. Featured is a CAD drawing program that stretches the boundaries of the 8-bit machine. It takes so much raw memory to rotate big objects in three dimensions that CAD programs have been long in coming. This one, CAD-M by Mike Milroy, is a good one.

LOADSTAR #64 will also have CRYPTO DIARY by Barbara Schulak, two excellent arcade games by Jon Mattson, etc...

Membership Report—January 90

by Lucien St.Denis

If your name appears on this list, please check with me, your membership chairman. A 1 month grace period will be allowed, then your name will automatically be removed from the membership list.

Membership standing is 231, please renew now.

DATE.....NAME	DATE.....NAME
90/01/02 ..Bob Parent	90/01/03.. Larry Horbik
90/01/04 ..Jim Perkins	90/01/05.. J.M.(Jim)Campbell
90/01/07 ..Jan G. Frajkor	90/01/08.. Jim Davidson
90/01/10 ..Jean T. Guenette	90/01/12.. Don MacMillan
90/01/13 ..Robert Barber	90/01/15.. Robert N. Fischer
90/01/17 ..George Armstrong	90/01/18Charles Hickman
90/01/19 ..Yves Chrelien	
90/02/01 ..Gerald E. Corey	90/02/02.. Neil MacLellan
90/02/04 ..Garry Gierman	90/02/05.. Dan Alton
90/02/06 ..Steve Wiman	90/02/07.. Morley Cashman
90/02/08 ..Lawrence Nafe	90/02/11.. Steve Wilson
90/02/12 ..Herb Kochl	90/02/13.. F.D.Williams
90/02/14 ..Grant/MikeMannery	90/02/15.. Barry L. Mattews
90/02/16 ..Brian A. Keogh	90/02/17.. Steve Dunne
90/02/18 ..Chuck Klassen	90/02/19.. Peter Biesterfield
90/03/01 ..Pam/Kal Bedard	90/03/02.. Jerry G. Wilson
90/03/03 ..William McDougall	90/03/04.. Glenn Nixon
90/03/05 ..George A. Duey	90/03/06.. Sherrell Franklin
90/03/07 ..Dan Faber	90/03/08.. David D. Irvine
90/03/09 ..Peter Papworth	90/03/10.. Reg. J. Young
90/03/11 ..Gaetan G. Lalonde	90/03/12.. John Sills
90/03/14 ..Wayne H. Moore	90/03/15.. Otto Blank
90/03/16 ..Al C. Hutchison	90/03/17.. Robin K. Moore
90/03/18 ..Ivan Russell	90/03/19.. Brian Cunningham
90/03/20 ..Wayne MacDonald	90/03/21.. Donald B. Ross
90/03/22 ..Brock Williams	90/03/23.. J.F. Aubarbier
90/03/24Walter Dyck	90/03/25.. Shane Clark

90/03/26..John Hanna	90/03/27..Nancy Mitchell
90/03/28.. Keith Hudson	90/03/29.. Kevin Lee
90/03/30..Bruce G. Marshall	90/03/31..Orville J. Lennon
90/03/32..Mr/Mrs.Blondeau	90/03/33..K. Weaver
90/03/34..Helen Lowe	90/03/35 ..Yvan Gaudette
90/03/36.. Dave Mullington	

Welcome New Members
(N=New-R=renewal)

02/01 .. John Witherspoon(R)	02/02 ...David Fairbrother(N)
02/03 .. Hans Hageraats(R)	02/04 ...Andrew Malcolm(R)
02/05 .. Dr. Ronald Blattel(R)	02/06 ..Jack Stekelenberg(R)
02/07 .. Robert Matylewicz(R)	02/08 ...Ted Hopkins(R)
02/09 .. Madhu Joshi(N)	02/10 ...Richard/Lynn Lauzon(N)
02/11 .. Bob/Susan Greenberg(N)	02/12 ...Henry F. Greenway(R)

Librarian's Comments

by Bob Mason

In January Bob and Eric Thomas brought in several Loadstar 128 disks and demonstrated some of the programs they contained.

For comparison they also brought in a Loadstar 64 disk—it was pretty obvious that Loadstar is putting a lot more time into their C64 disks.

I also ran three good telecommunications programs from the C128 Library: Ultraterm (completely menu-driven), Nezterm (choose from 9 different character sets, or design your own) and Pro-128-Term (which has a colour graphics mode).

For the second time in a row there was a fairly small turnout, and we discussed only having the SIG every second month.

In the end we decided to have the next meeting at Lucien St. Denis' place, and take a look at his database, and the problems of transferring data from one database to another.

That's what we'll be doing in February.

Part 3: "Intro To CP/M "

by Bob Mason

This is the third and final instalment of my "Introduction to CP/M". So far we've gone through some basic procedures, upgraded the system disk, and are in the process of making a set of disks with 9 essential utilities. Seven of the 9 utilities are available from the club library in uncompressed form, and can just be copied to one disk, though in some cases the document files will have to be unsqueezed. But the 2 remaining files, CATALOGZ.LBR and PCFILEZ.LBR are in library form, and when removed from the library will have to be uncrunched. We'll be using NSWP207 to unsqueeze, LSWEEP13 to extract from the library (both are on club disk (Z)AAD) and UNCR20 (from (Z)AAL) to uncrunch the files.

This is probably a good time to talk about RAM Expanders and second disk drives, because if you have either, you'll want to use them on these two larger files. In CP/M every device has a letter: the first disk drive is a:; the second b:; internal memory is e:; and RAM expander memory is m:. The letter is always followed by a colon. So pip m:=a:.* copies all files from the disk in the a: drive to the RAM expander and pip a:=b:.*com copies all files with the extension .com from the disk in b: drive to the disk in the a: drive and pip c:=a:filename.ext copies the file called filename.ext from the a: drive to memory and then back to another disk in the a: drive (you're prompted to swap disks). These letters work with all CP/M programs.

NSWEEP

One of the most popular public domain programs is the NSWEEP series—it's currently up to revision 208 but I'm using 207 from disk (Z)AAD, NSWP207. It can copy, erase, squeeze or unsqueeze, print and view files. With the disk in drive a:, type nswp207. The program runs and after a brief introduction comes up with the first directory entry for the disk in drive a:. At this point you can change the disk in drive a:, and type l to log the new disk, and the program will come back with the first program on the new disk. Type a question mark to get a list of commands. Some of the commands work on the current file (tag, untag, copy, erase, etc.), some work on all tagged files (mass copy, squeeze, etc.) and some commands work independent of the current file or of all tagged files (help, exit, log disk, etc.).

To unsqueeze a file, put the disk with the file to be unsqueezed in drive a: and log the disk, and the first file will come up. Hitting the return or space bar will move you to the next file; you can scroll through the directory this way, wrapping back to the first entry after the last one. When you get to the file you want to unsqueeze, type t to tag it. The program will put an asterisk beside the entry and move on to the next entry. You can now tag more files, or press q to unsqueeze that file. If you press q, the program returns "Squeeze, Unsqueeze or Reverse?" (type letter). You type u and the program returns "To which drive/user?" Here you type e: for single drive, b: if you have two drives or m: if you have a RAM expander. The program then begins unsqueezing the file, writing it to the drive you specified, with the same filename except that the q in the filename extension (indicating a squeezed file) is replaced with the proper letter (.dqc becomes .doc, .cqm becomes .com, etc.). If you

specified drive c:, it will prompt you to put disk e: in the drive, and you can replace the source disk with the destination disk at this point.

I use this program to copy the CP/M disks. I load the program, put the master disk in drive a: and type l, it comes up with the first entry, I type t for each file, and when all files are tagged, I type m (for mass copy—all tagged files) and when it asks for the destination drive, I type b:. It's not a fast method, but it works.

LSWEEP

For de-libraring files, use LSWEEP13 from library disk (Z)AAD. With this program, the file you want to work on (de-library) must be specified when you run the program; this means it must be on the system when you run the program. This is no problem if you have a second drive or a RAM expander—with the program in drive a: and the subject file in drive b: or in RAM you would type LSWEEP13 b:filename.lbr or LSWEEP13 m:filename.lbr. If you only have a single drive, then you would use NSWP207 to copy LSWEEP13 and the subject file to a disk, then put that disk in the drive and type LSWEEP13 filename.lbr. LSWEEP has a document file but it's really quite simple to use, as there are only four options, once you have specified the library file: ? for help, e for extract, v to view a viewable file (text or document) or x to exit. The program operates in the same manner as NSWP: it goes into the library and gets a directory of the files; then it lists the first one on the screen. To de-library, you have to extract all the files from the library. When you indicate that a file is to be extracted, it asks for the destination drive. Here you have different options depending on your system.

With a RAM expander, copy the .lbr file to m: (RAM), then with LSWEP in a: (disk drive) type LSWEEP13 m:filename.LBR. Extract the files to m:, then copy them to a blank disk in a: with 2 drives, put LSWEEP13 in a: and the .LBR file in b:. Type LSWEEP13 b:filename.LBR and when the first filename comes in, remove the program disk from a: and insert a blank disk. Type e to extract and when it asks for the destination drive, type a:.

With a single drive, prepare a disk with LSWEEP13 and the .LBR file on it. Type LSWEEP13 filename.LBR and after typing e to extract the file, indicate e:, and when prompted, swap disks in a: drive.

When you de-library PCFILEZ.LBR and CATALOGZ.LBR, the files will have .*z* extension, indicating that they are crunched. Club library disk (Z)AAL. Each file with the .*z* (* represents ANY letter) will have to be uncrunched, and the procedure is exactly the same as with LSWEEP—you have to specify the file to be uncrunched when you run the program.

With these instructions and those in the two previous articles, you should be able to handle all files in the club library, and create the utility disks necessary to make your CP/M sessions easy sailing. If you have any questions or problems with these instructions, please don't hesitate to call me.

MR. DRACULA



Postmaster:

If undeliverable, return to:

P.O. Box 4164, Station "C"
Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4P3